

LEATHERHEAD



THE STORY

f MARINE CORPS
BOOT CAMP

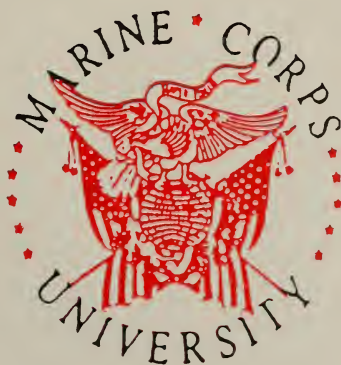
by
Packwood

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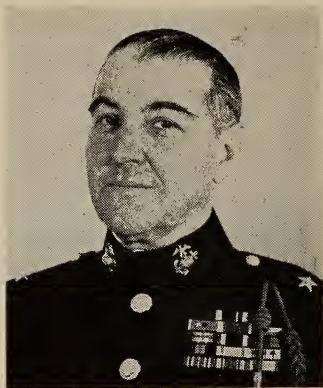
Second Printing

To Sgt A. B. SUGGS, my own
DI, who has been the inspiration
for every cartoon on Boot Camp
I have ever drawn. N.E.P.



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MajGen Gerald C. Thomas

As well as I can ascertain Parris Island has changed only in physical appearance in the last 34 years. The type training and the impression "boot camp" makes on the new Marines seem the same today as it was in 1917.

I can understand *Leatherhead's* impression of boot camp because I went from Chicago to Parris Island as a new recruit in May 1917. I joined the 32nd Company "M" and "graduated" with that unit 12 August 1917. I well remember my DI—Gunnery Sergeant Borden, who was later commissioned. He died in the influenza epidemic of 1918.

After leaving PI on 12 August 1917, I joined the 75th Company at Quantico which is now "B" Company, 6th Marines and left for France 15 September 1917.

Parris Island had not changed appreciably when I returned there in July 1928 as motor transport officer. Since that time I have only visited the island.

Both San Diego and Parris Island contribute immeasurably to the Marine Corps' success. The indoctrination and basic training conducted at these two depots lays a solid foundation for future service.

G. C. THOMAS

Major General, U. S. Marine Corps

Dear Reader,

This book, while it depicts an accurate account of Boot Camp routine, is necessarily exaggerated in many parts. It does not attempt to describe Boot Camp as it actually is but, rather, to present it as it appears to the recruit at the time he is going through.

Our hero, "LEATHERHEAD," represents the combined bewilderment and confusion of every Marine who has undergone recruit training. His name is a combination of two famous Marine Corps by-words: "Leatherneck," a descriptive adjective for all Marines since the time of the Corps' origin in 1775, and "Skinhead," a word long used to describe the recruit, for reason of the unglamorous haircut given at the beginning of training.

LEATHERHEAD will take over from here and give you his story of LIFE IN BOOT CAMP.

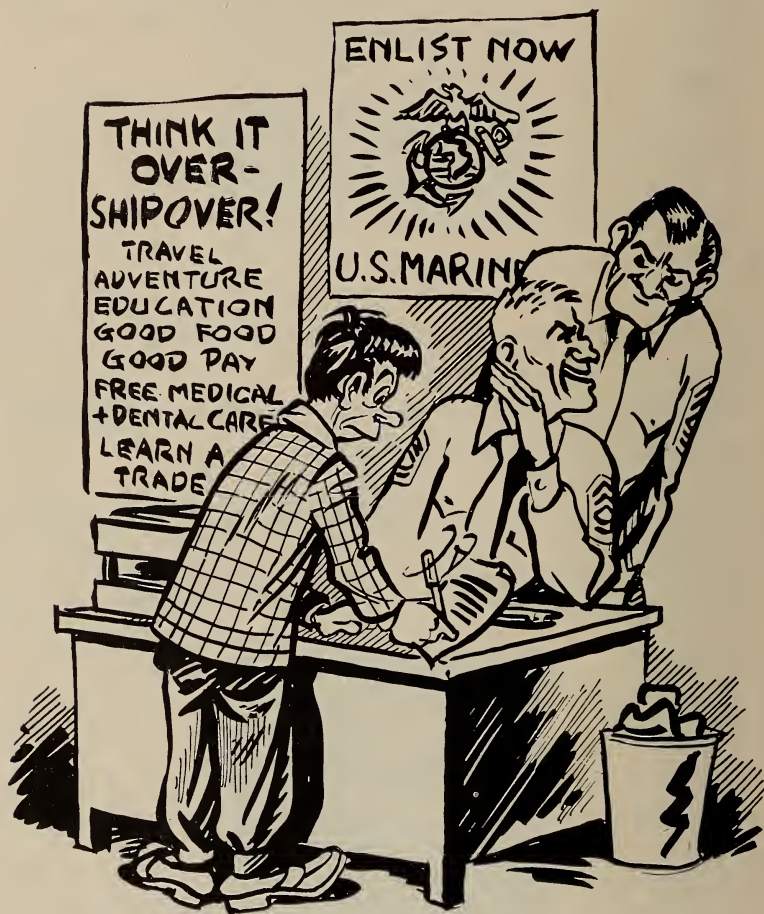
Howard E. Packwood, Jr.

Sergeant, USMC



Sgt N. E. Packwood, Jr.

I joined the Marine Corps strictly of my own accord.



"Shhh—I told him this was the Post Office—he thinks he's signing for a package."

The next thing I knew, Navy doctors were giving me a thorough physical examination.



"Hmmm—I can't see anything here."



"I don't care if you can or not—you stay here 'til you do!"



"But you agree there are letters on it? OK—next!"

I was given every opportunity to change my decision.



"Now, young man, you still have time to back out before I give you the oath."

I figured on starting out one jump ahead of the Marine Corps . . .



"I heard about Marine Corps haircuts, so I had mine cut short—
I bet they won't even touch it when I get to PI."

... but discovered they had all the moves figured out beforehand.



"Please don't cut it—it'll take months to grow out again!"

We were given our first clothing issue . . .



"It's alright if your clothes are too small—you'll lose weight in Boot Camp—and yours are too large—well, you'll probably gain a little weight."

and received our first introduction to our DI, Sgt. Bonecrusher.



"You men are now (ugh) Marines!"

Our platoon then entered into a forming period where we became familiar with Marine Corps routine and terminology.



"But sir, when we came in you said everyone should get a sack."



"Hit th' deck? What'd it ever do to me?"



"HIT THE DECK!!!"



"By yer . . . by yer . . . by yer FURLOUGH, sir!"

I discovered that a "veteran" is anyone who has been in Boot Camp longer than you have.



"Boy, how long you been in the Marine Corps?"

*It was difficult at first, but I soon became accustomed to the fact
that the DI is never wrong.*



"Whaddya mean, ya shaved this mornin'! If I say ya didn't shave,
ya didn't shave!"

Then started a complete physical checkup and reconditioning. We were given a dental checkup . . .



"This is quite a cavity you have here—where's my chisel?"



"TEN-SHUN!"

... blood test ...



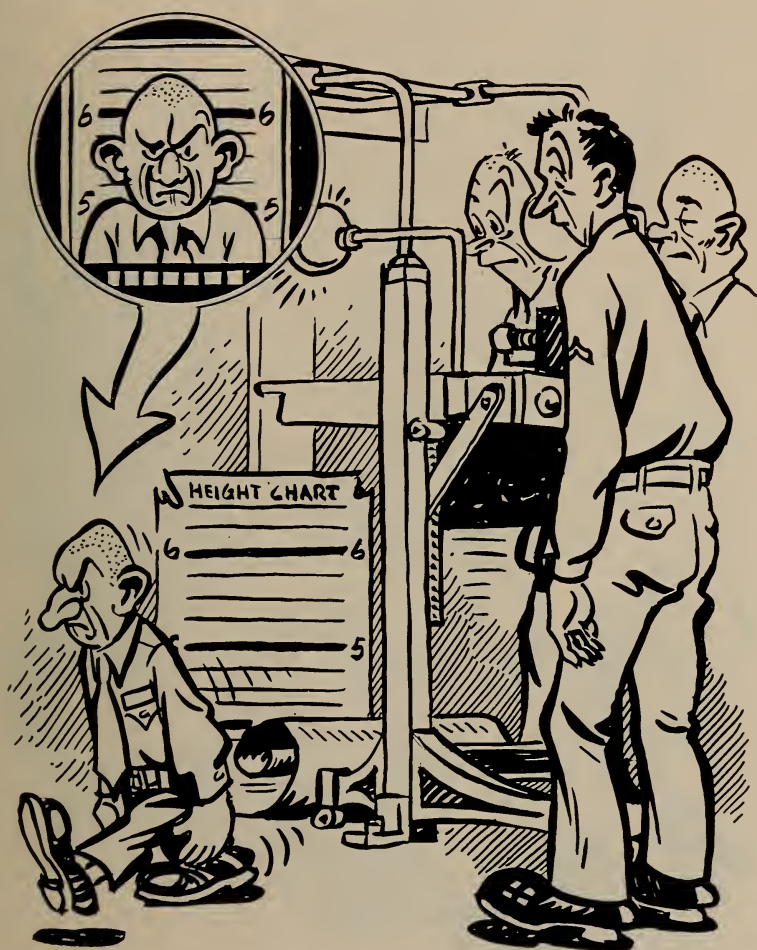
"That enough, Joe—turn it off."

... and shots.

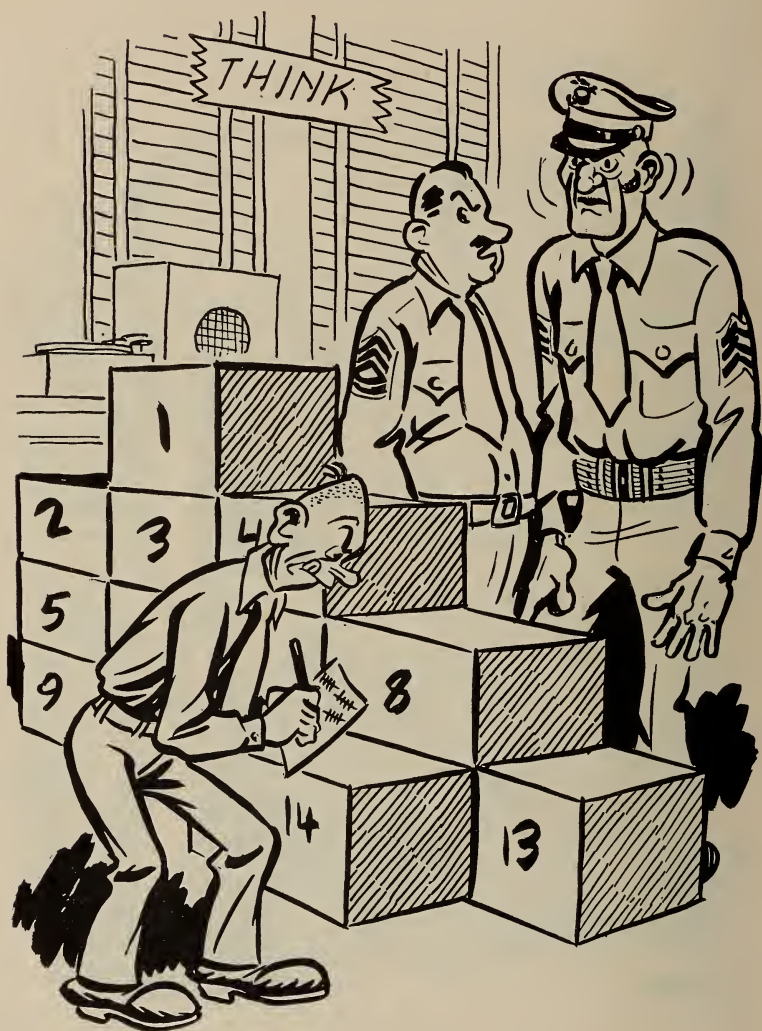


"OUCH!!!"

We had ID pictures taken . . .



... and were given General Classification Tests.



"One of your men seems to be having a little trouble with his GCT."

One of the major phases of recruit training is close order drill.



"I CAN'T HEAR YOUR HEELS!!!"



"Leatherhead! When're you going to learn how to do 'TO THE REAR, MARCH'!"



"Well, whaddya know—reveille already!"

*Like the U. S. mail, neither rain, nor snow, nor sleet, nor hail
could stop us.*



"HEY REEP, YER LOLFT, HUP REEP, YER LOLFT!"



"What'd I tell you about moving in ranks!"



"Don't wake him up—this is the first time he's done everything right!"

Our practical experience on the field was supplemented by many hours of classroom instruction.



"How many times should Rocks and Shoals be read? Why—uh—over and over."

Staying awake, however, often proved to be a problem.



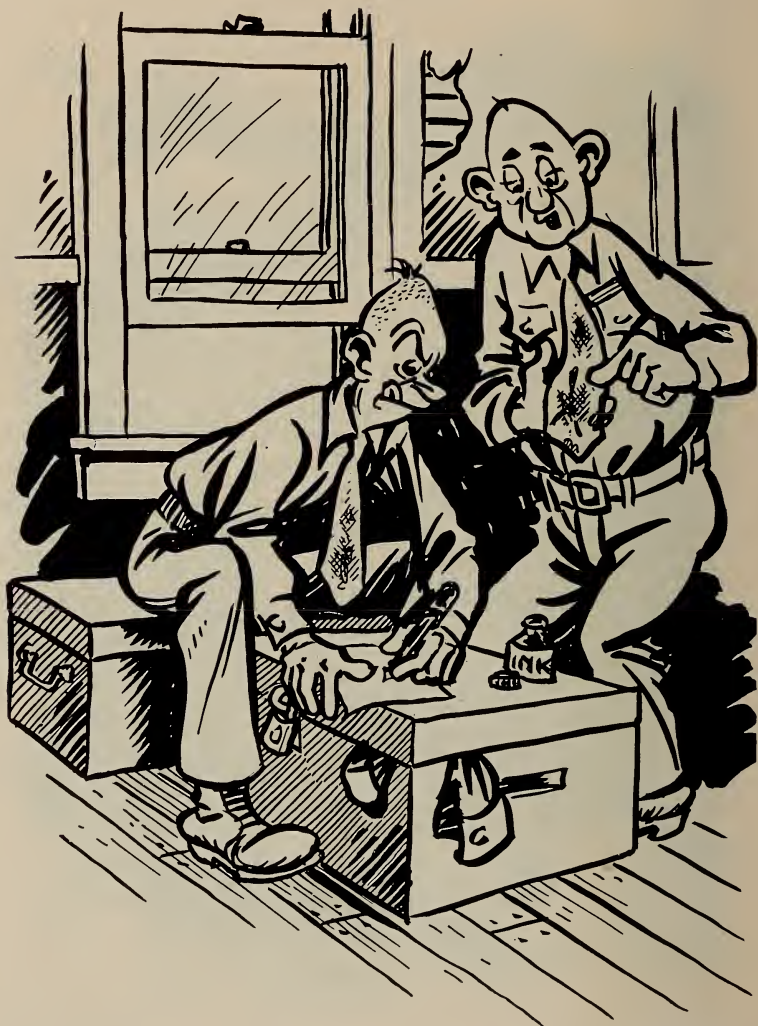
"Don't say a thing—let ME wake him up—that's my boy!"

Training films were also a source of instruction.



"Rat-a-tat-tat-tat . . . gotcha! Rat-a-tat-tat-tat . . . take that an—"

The biggest complaint about chow was that more went on the outside than on the inside.



"And for lunch we had mashed potatoes, beets, cole slaw, spare ribs . . ."

We discovered that a "FIELD DAY" in the Marine Corps is not a track meet.



"Seems like a funny way to clean the deck—throwing sand on it."

I was chosen a squad leader due to my obviously superior intelligence.



"I done taught my men everything I know, and they still don't know nothin'!"

The outdoor movie provided our evening entertainment.



"WATER! WATER!"

We learned to appreciate the electric washing machine.





"Well, I got ONE spot clean."

We learned, also, that it does not pay to be a "sick bay soldier" unless something is actually the matter.



"What's the matter with you?"

11/11



Fire watch was an unwelcome duty, but it often proved interesting.



"You wuz wrasselin' with yer pillow—wuz she blonde or brunette?"

On bivouac at the "Boondocks" we were given tear gas training. . .



"We can't wait here all day—leave one man to look for Leather-head as soon as the gas clears."

... and learned to live in the open.



"Hey in there! Are yer blankets dry?"



"Didn't I tell you to stand at attention when you talk to me!!!
Whaddya want?"



"I knew we left him out here someplace, sir."



"I forgot my mess gear, sir."



"I know the mosquitoes are bad out here, but come on and stop complaining."

Every platoon drew its share of guard duty.



"Sir, my second general order is: To walk my post in a military manner—"



"Have at you, varlet—take that, you swine, and—OOPS"

Major milestones of Boot Camp were the 12th, 24th and 54th day inspections. More dreaded, though, were the preliminary inspections held by our DI.



"Sir, my tenth general order is: To salute all colors and standards, and all officers not cased."



"You can quit hiding, Leatherhead—I know you forgot your rifle!"



"I'll have it in a minute, sir."



"Ha! Fooled ya!"



"Whoops! Heads up!"





"That's something I never thot I'd live to see!"



*We also stood one clothing inspection, affectionately known as
"junk on the bunk."*



"Your clothes are in a terrible shape!"

We participated in battalion parades on several occasions.

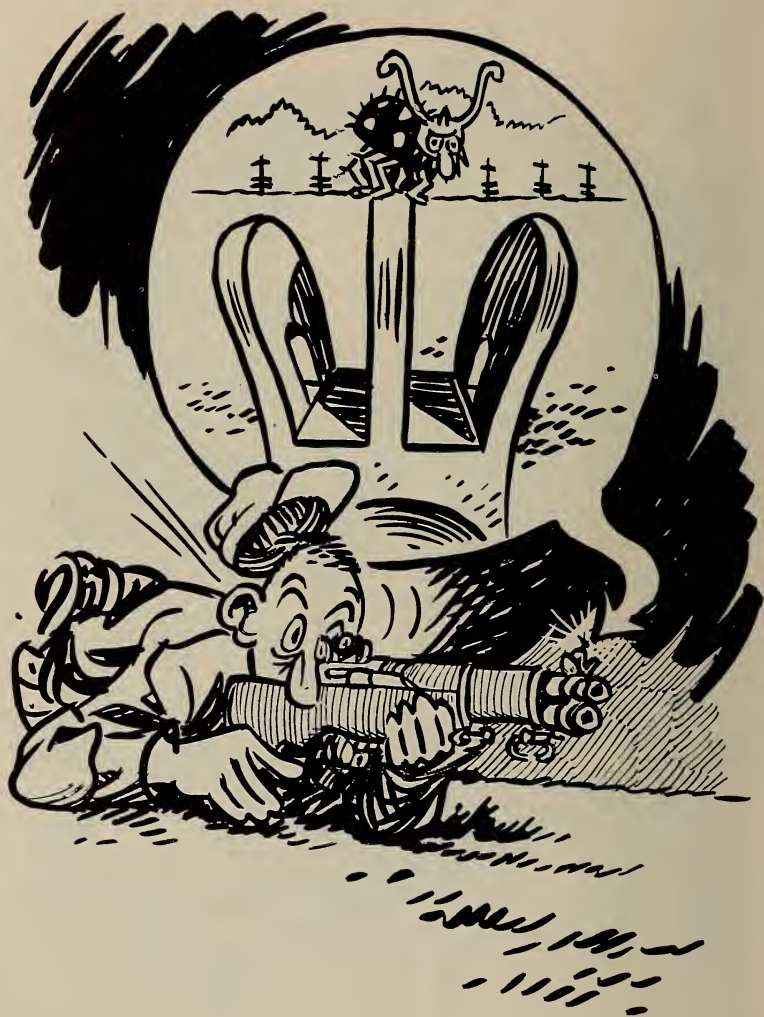


"There's a likely looking prospect, Mac—keep an eye on him."

It was a big day when we shoved off for the Rifle Range . . . until we learned that "snapping in" included bones and muscles.



"With a sitting position like this, you're a cinch to qualify!"



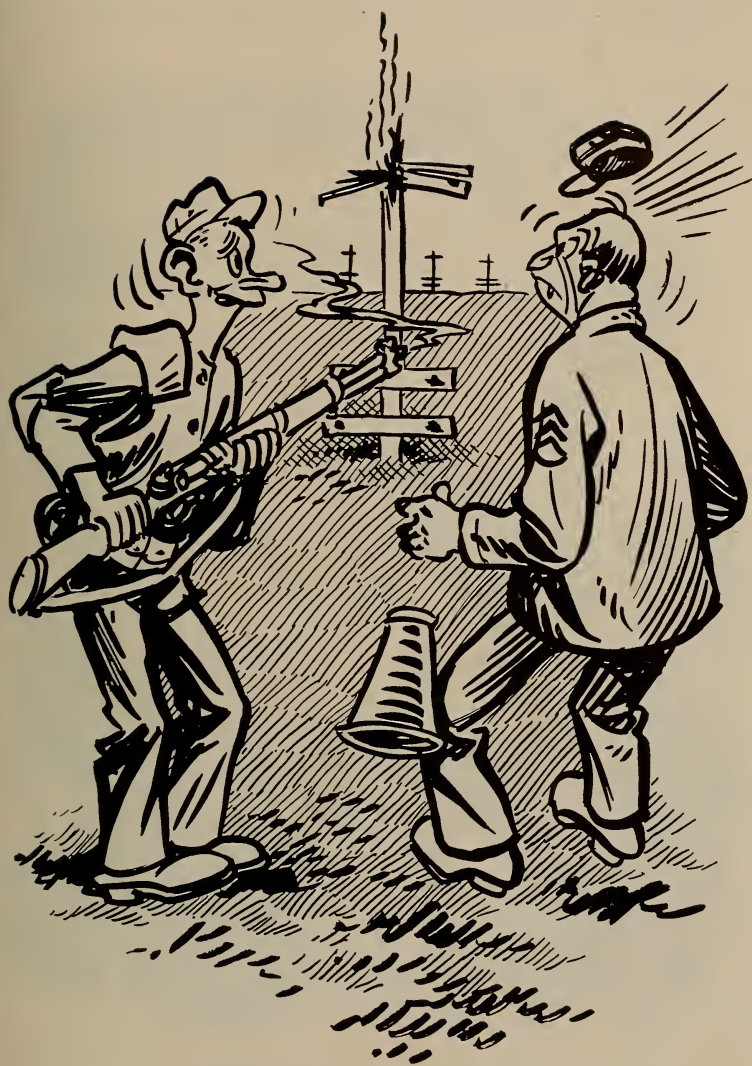
"Gad! Whotta monster!"



"I got th' warrant officer—you get th' lieutenant."



"Let him sleep now—he'll need it tonight when he snaps in on fire watch."



"Heh, heh—bullseye."

In addition to snapping in we studied sighting, reading and marking targets, and various subjects related to firing.



"Now, say the bullet went through here—"

At last we started actual firing . . . the .22 rifle, .45 caliber pistol . . .



"Look, sir—nothing happens."

Record day was preceded by two days of preliminary firing with the M1.



"Six-o'clock in the bull? I can't even see the target!"

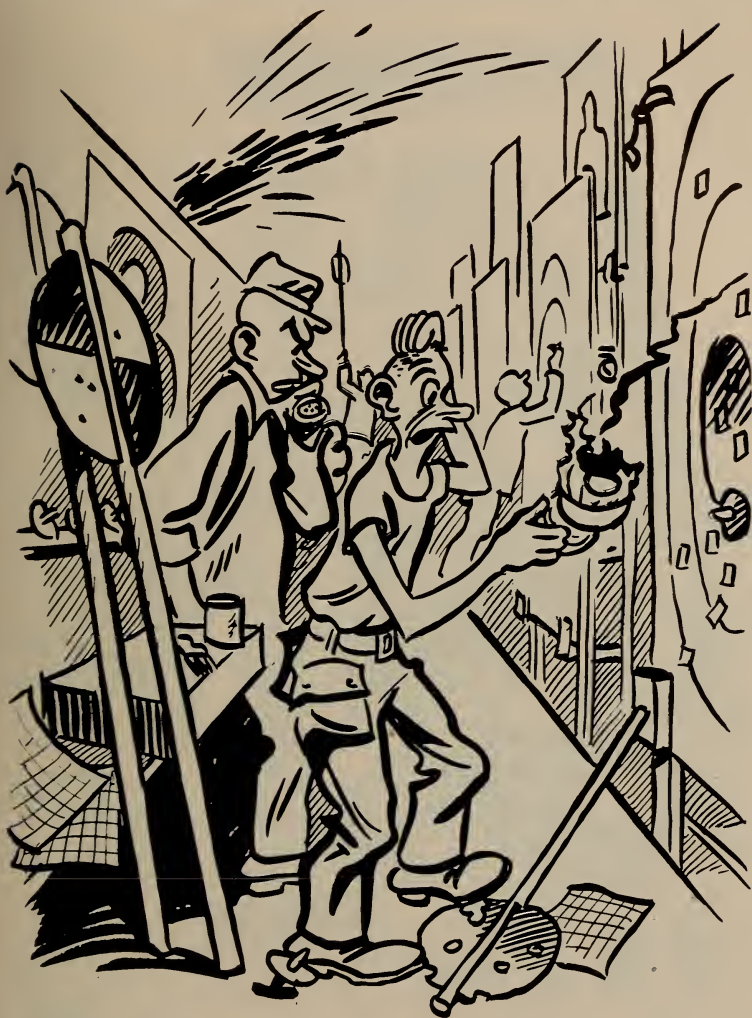


"Er—they all musta went through th' same hole."



"OK! Now try it again!"

Targets had to be marked, so we drew "Butts" detail.



"Line? Tell number eight to stop playing around while we're marking!"

And then came Record Day!



"STOPPAGE!!!"

After Record Day we were familiarized with other weapons such as mortars, machine guns, flame throwers, bazookas, rifle grenades . . .



"Kicked a little more than you expected, eh?"

... and hand grenades.



"This one must be busted, sir—it came all apart."



"I got it!—It's mine!—No, I got it!"

Our spare time was utilized on work details.



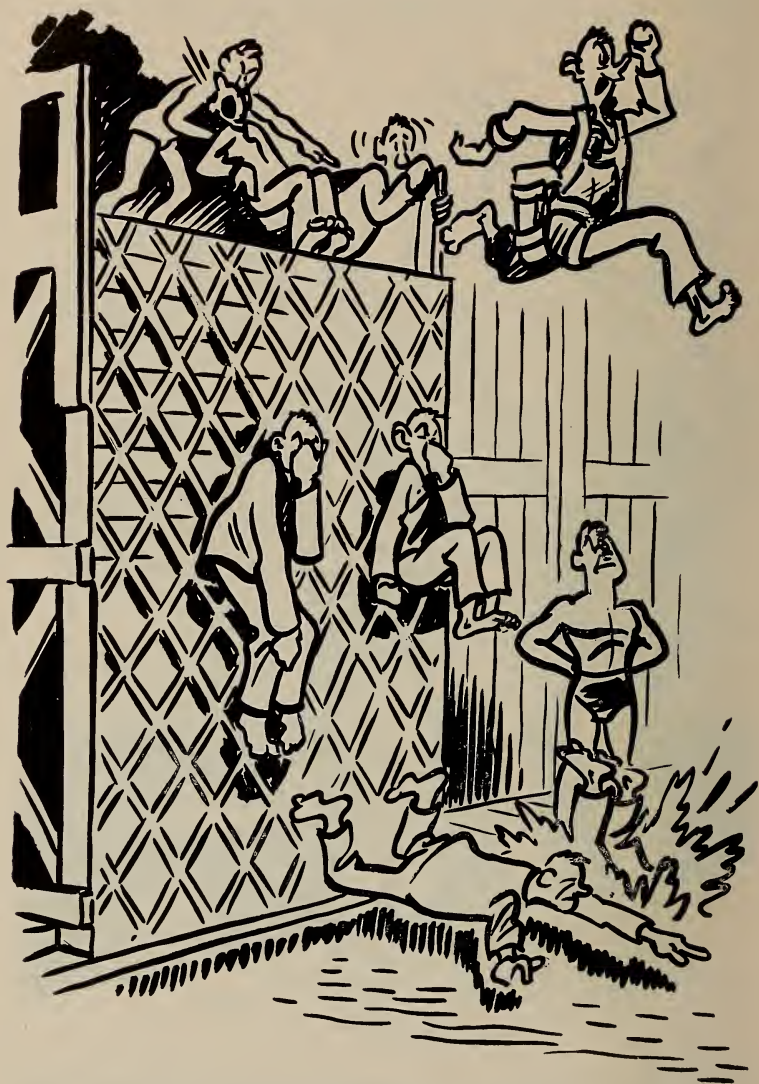
"Let's take these over first—then we can all three help carry the big one."

While at the range, non-swimmers were given instructions . . .



"One of the men asked me to count while he held his breath under water—what comes after ONE THOUSAND?"

... while the talented were treated to a new form of torture called combat swimming.



"GUNG HOOOOO!!!"

It is not necessary to explain mess duty . . .



"Come inside right away—we're going to be inspected!"



"What'd I tell you about keeping your skivvie shirt clean!!!"

Eventually it was all over, and we graduated from Boot Camp . . . but the fact that we were full-fledged Marines did not seem to impress our DI.



"You men are Marines now—fall out and take a five minute smoke!"



"You people can have anything you want at the PX—soap, toothpaste, razor blades . . ."

As a final proof that the worst was over, the platoon posed for its graduation picture.



"Now, everyone move back a little—that's good!"

My fondest dream finally became a reality . . . I was on my way home!



"Good morning, sir!"



"I know it's hard to make an important decision by yourself after three months in Boot Camp, but do you want one or don't you?"

Like every other man freshly out of Boot Camp, I sought to impress the public with my newly won importance.



"PORTER!"

I even dropped in to say hello to my buddies, the recruiting sergeants.



"Hello, sergeant, remember me? I came back to tell you what I thot of Boot Camp!"



"I'm sorry, Agnes, but after the movies I saw in Boot Camp, I'm through with women!"

Boot Camp had made a decided change in my outlook on life. Somehow I was anxious to get back to Parris Island. Once there I was assigned to Casual Company as an "AT."



"Yer not doin' so hot with th' swing blade—wanna try th' hoe?"

My first great adventure was over. Yet in cursing over the hardships I had endured, I could not conceal a note of pride. The three months of endless training had prepared me to face the future with confidence in my ability to uphold the honor and tradition of the United States Marine Corps.



"Well, the recruiting sergeant said I would do a lot of traveling!"

GLOSSARY OF MARINE CORPS TERMS

- AT** — awaiting transfer
- BASTILLE** — brig
- BOOK, THE** — Marine Corps Manual
- BOONDOCKS** — rough ground
- BOONDOCKERS** — field shoes
- BOOT CAMP** — the training and transition period from civilian to Marine
— also known by various unprintable descriptive adjectives.
- BRASS** — metal surfaces abundantly located in barracks and offices, the
polishing of which is designed to utilize the spare time of Marines
below the rank of NCO — also, officers
- BULKHEAD** — wall
- BUTTS** — concrete reenforced pit where targets are marked during range
firing — makes you realize how a clay pigeon feels in a shooting gallery
- BUTTS AND MUZZLES** — a form of physical drill with rifles, during
which the weight of the rifle increases proportionately with the length
of time the exercise is performed
- COOLIE** — a recruit
- DECK** — floor, usually in perpetual need of swabbing, waxing or polishing
- DI** — drill instructor — identifies himself to his platoon as their father,
mother and guardian throughout Boot Camp — recruits, however,
usually have difficulty in recognizing this association
- DING HAU (HOW)** — Marine-adopted Chinese expression meaning well
done or very good
- FIELD DAY** — complete clean up
- FIRE WATCH** — a patrol of the squadbay between 10:00 P. M. and 6:00
A. M. in two hour shifts
- GCT** — General Classification Test
- GENERAL ORDERS** — a set of eleven standard orders which apply to all
types of guard duty
- GUN** — what no Marine carries on his shoulder
- GUNG HO** — a cry of oriental extraction emitted by Marines when they
feel an overpowering surge of affection toward the Corps—literal trans-
lation: work together
- GUNNEY** — technical sergeant
- GUNNER** — warrant officer or chief warrant officer
- HEAD** — lavatory
- HEY REEP YER LOLFT HUP REEP YER LOLFT** — hey reep yer lolft
hup reep yer lolft (drill cadence as voiced by DI)
- ID** — identification

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PARRIS ISLAND

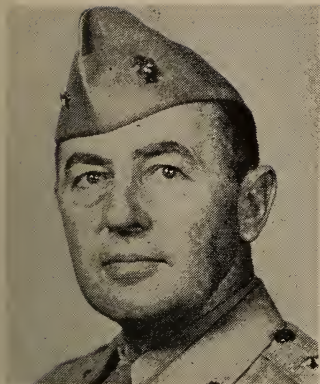


Parris Island is just off the coast of South Carolina almost equidistant from Charleston and Savannah. Marines have been connected with the history of the island since the Civil War, but a post was not established there until 1891. In this year the Navy established a base known as Port Royal, and a small detachment

of Marines formed the guard. This detachment was commended for heroic service when a tidal wave swept over the island in 1893. In 1909 a Marine officers school was established at PI but two years later was moved to Charleston. According to "old timers," the Navy had its fill of sand fleas and turned its land and buildings over to the Marine Corps in 1915. By 1917 the entire island was in use for training Marines for overseas duty. Since that date PI has seen thousands of men undergo the transition from civilian to Marine.



MajGen Robert H. Pepper



MajGen William T. Clement

Young men residing west of the Mississippi River can almost assure themselves a trip to California by joining the Marine Corps. On San Diego Bay lies the west coast "boot camp" for Marines. About the only difference between San Diego and PI is the climate. Training is the same.

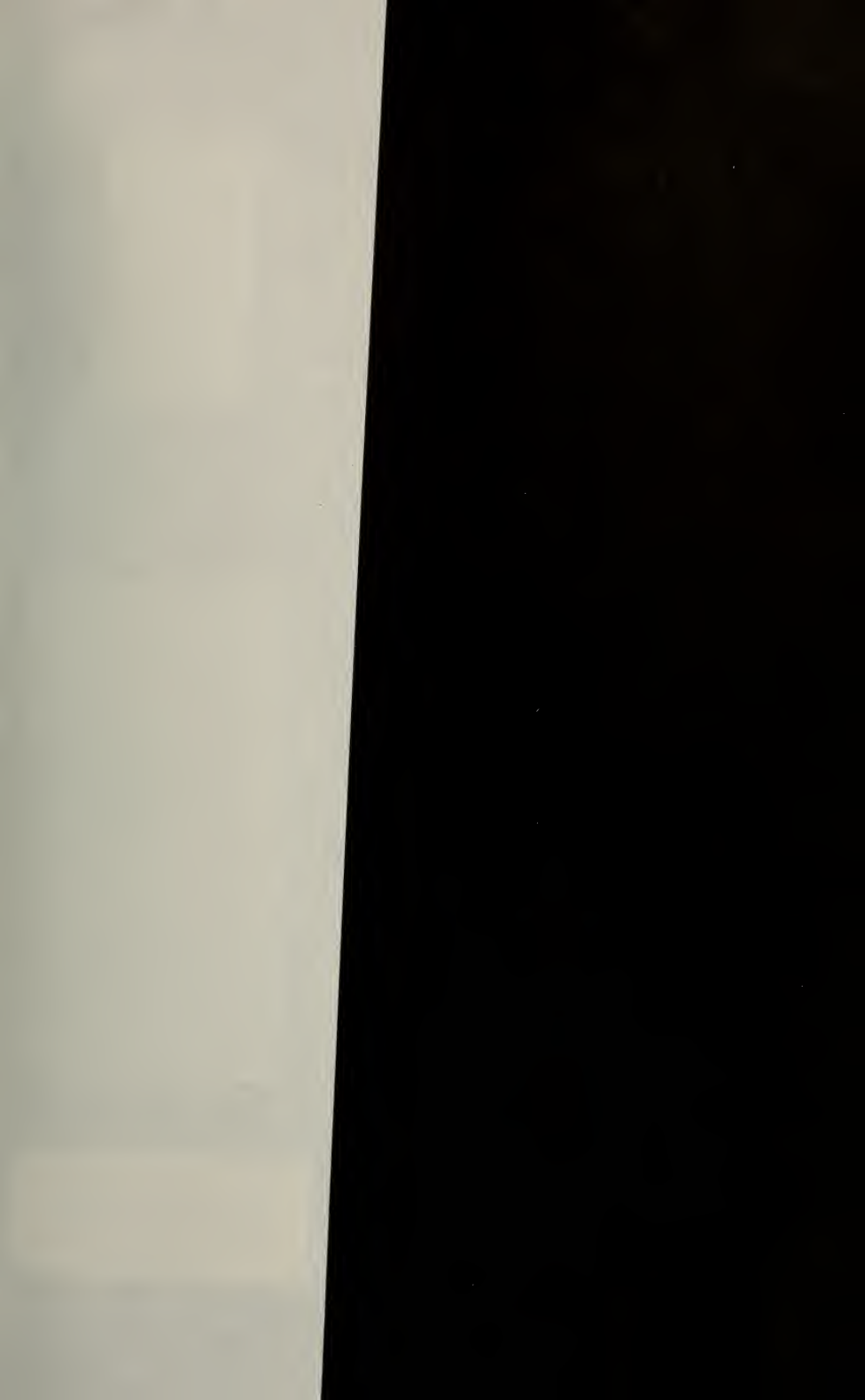
First steps toward establishing a base at San Diego were taken in 1915 by Commandant Barnett, Assistant Secretary Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Col. Joseph H. Pendleton. In 1917 the Marine

Corps purchased 232 acres, and the City of San Diego donated 500 adjoining acres. World War I interrupted plans, and it was not until 1921 that the first Marine detachment occupied the base. The Recruit Depot was moved from Mare Island to San Diego in 1923 and has remained there since. At one time the famous and widely traveled Fourth Marines used the base as a staging area for its many expeditions.

SAN DIEGO



JUNK ON THE BUNK — clothing and equipment prepared for inspection on bed
LADDER — stairs
LIBERTY — time off
LIBERTY HOUND — one who goes on liberty excessively
LINE — firing line at Rifle Range
LOCK AND LOAD — lock rifle and load with ammunition—get ready
PIECE — weapon
PX — Post Exchange
RACK — bed
READ OFF — to reprimand verbally
ROCKS AND SHOALS — Articles for the Government of the Navy
SACK — bed — sometimes used to describe a recruit, at which time contents are also noted
SACK DRILL — all exercise performed in the squadbay when recruits are obviously getting too much sleep
SADDLE UP — prepare to shove off
SCOOP — information
SCUTTLEBUTT — drinking fountain or small talk
SHOVE OFF — leave, get out
SIX-O-CLOCK — the center of the bottom of the bullseye
SICK BAY — medical dispensary
SICK BAY SOLDIER — one who dopes off by reporting to sick bay at every opportunity
SKINHEAD — recruit
SKIVVIES — underclothing
SLOP CHUTE — tavern
SNAPPING IN — a ritual process of bending bones and stretching muscles while learning correct positions for firing, in which the difficult is done immediately and the impossible takes a little longer — to practice in anything
SOP — standing operating procedure
STAND BY — be ready
STOPPAGE — failure of a weapon to function properly
SWAB — mop
SWAB JOCKEY — term for members of another branch of the Naval Service
"TOP" — first sergeant
WORD, THE — an emphatic order



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